California Transportation Commission

Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines
Work Group Meeting Notes

Thursday, June 28, 2007 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Sacramento Convention Center, Room 204
1400 J Street, Sacramento, CA

Introduction

John Barna, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission

- Envisions a two step process to revising the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Guidelines:
  - A separate effort is under way to address technical changes to the RTP Guidelines as a result of SAFETEA-LU.
  - The purpose of the RTP Work Group is to assist the California Transportation Commission (Commission) in updating the RTP guidelines to incorporate meeting AB 32 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and to enhance the use of regional blueprint plans.
- Senate President pro Tempore Don Perata has requested that the Commission report back its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by the end of 2007.
- Some ideas and considerations may extend beyond the RTP guidelines.
- The entire RTP Work Group will meet on either the last Thursday or Friday of the month through October.

Jim Ghielmetti, Chair, California Transportation Commission

- RTP work group process is only as good as the people who participate.
- Consideration should be made to taking away local transportation dollars if a local government is not willing to participate in developing sound general plans.
- Help is needed to address, with certainty, where housing and transit should be located in order to build a system that will really work.

Will Kempton, Director, California Department of Transportation

- Envisions two phases for the RTP guidelines:
  1. Address SAFETEA-LU requirements.
  2. Opportunity to target critical changes in guidelines which ultimately will feed into bond programming and other programming.
- The Department of Transportation (Department) has taken significant steps towards reduction in greenhouse gases and emission reduction. For example, the Department has implemented a green fleet program, converted the District 10 office to solar energy, and recently issued a Director's policy on energy and a commitment to eliminate greenhouse gases.
- From the transportation perspective, land use must be addressed.
- The Blueprint Network Task Force has given grants to regions to focus on blueprint planning efforts. To date $10 million was allocated. The Department wants to work with its partners to develop positive changes and sound guidelines.

Regional Transportation Plan Overview

Joan Sollenberger, California Department of Transportation
Statewide Efforts to Prepare Regional Transportation Plans (PowerPoint)

- Regional blueprint planning is a voluntary activity by urban areas to look at land use, air quality, water quality, etc.
- $5 million will be provided this year for metropolitan areas for blueprint planning.
- Department is staff to the Commission in preparing RTP guidelines.
- Technical changes due to SAFETEA-LU` will be incorporated into the RTP guidelines for adoption in September.
- A 20 year housing and transportation projection still needs to be completed.

Lisa Klein, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Current Transportation Planning Efforts in the San Francisco Bay Area to Address Global Warming (PowerPoint)

- One approach to providing "teeth" in City and County general plans is to provide an incentive approach by asking locals to step up and change the way they address housing developments.

Requirements of Assembly Bill 32

Lynn Terry, Air Resources Board
Requirements and Implementation of AB 32 (PowerPoint)

- The Air Resources Board (ARB) has a lead role relative to AB 32 and must have a coordinated approach with others to implement the requirements of AB 32.
- AB 32 is a new opportunity to look at land use with local governments.
- An environmental justice committee is working with the ARB to provide input relative to the bill.
- Achieving low carbon fuel is a massive effort undertaken by ARB.
- Voluntary early action of compliance is promoted but ARB will ultimately adopt rules for credits.
- Keys to successful implementation include, but are not limited to:
  - Community input
  - Participation by key officials
  - Including implementation requirements of AB 32 into the regional and local planning processes.

Reza Navai, California Department of Transportation
Climate Action Team Report (PowerPoint)

- The objective of AB 32 is not inconsistent with current transportation strategies as many strategies have co-benefits. It is a matter of further enhancement of the current direction to the transportation system.
- Focal point is a strategic growth plan which shows that the state can accommodate growth in population and economy and still achieve improvements to greenhouse gas, reduce Vehicle Miles Travel (VMT), etc., through smart growth, public transit, etc., to reduce CO2 etc.
- VMT is dynamic and not static and could over-look certain strategies as VMT associated with congestion speed and free flow speed. Since VMT increases with increased population, it is important to be careful when measuring and comparing alternatives.

- There are many ideas to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions that could result in real benefit.
- A significant reduction can be achieved with the projects currently identified and with changes to land use.
- Many stakeholders recommend that mitigation is just one side of the equation. It is important to have adaptation measures as well.

Overview of Senate Bill 375

Victoria Rome, Natural Resources Defense Council
- Smart land use to arrive at transportation decisions is important to meet the state's requirements relative to AB 32.
- SB 375 is in progress and this is a first step to bring blueprint plans into fruition.

Tom Adams, California League of Conservation Voters
Why SB 375 and What it Does
- SB 375 addresses greenhouse gas from vehicles – attributable to VMT.
- VMT continues to grow.
- There is a new version of the bill that has gone into print this morning.
- SB 375 is a controversial bill as it is an attempt to build on to existing blueprint processes around the state.
- Preferred growth scenario similar to the federal land use allocation but requires that carbon targets established by ARB be achieved by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and RTPs.
- Rewards local governments that participate in the preferred growth scenario and that meet carbon targets.
- If carbon targets are not met, regions would be asked to identify programs and resources needed to achieve ARB's targets.
- With SB 375, there is still a need to address smart growth and land use regardless of what is done with vehicles and light use trucks.
- Senator Steinberg is attempting to address land use in SB 375.
- Lawsuits were filed that projects need to have a climate process performed for inclusion in an RTP.
- With SB 375 can address growth projections.
- Only have until 2020 to achieve 1990 levels and we cannot afford to wait to take action.
- If we fail to address emissions, we will not address AB 32.
- Need to get the bill right and get going.
- To achieve environmental goals, must ensure growth is provided in good locations. Otherwise, growth will continue to contribute to environmental problems.

Bill Craven, Office of Senator Darrell Steinberg
The View from the Legislature, Timing and Status of SB 375
- SB 375 represents Senator Steinberg's approach to an environmental issue that everyone is concerned about.
- The bill recognizes that, from an environmental perspective, growth is going to occur.
- The bill recommends that CEQA should be amended to provide incentives to address growth that meets environmental objectives.

- There are disagreements in the Legislature over whether environmental goals should be consistent with local land use authority. SB 375 says that environmental goals should be separate from local land use authority.
- SB 375 is in active negotiations relative to both the transportation and environmental parts of the bill.

David Goldstein, Natural Resources Defense Council
Background and Specifics of Modeling Provisions (PowerPoint)
- Smart growth includes compact residential development and better transit.

Modeling Opportunities and Challenges

Bob McCleary, Contra Costa Transportation Authority
- Existing modeling process is not broken.
- There are many that believe people should live the way they feel they ought to live and not the way others believe they should live.
- MPOs perform most of the modeling for planning purposes and not the federal and state governments.
- Requirements for modeling have changed and grown due to emissions, greenhouse gas, land use, congestion pricing, trucks, goods movement, inter-regional travel, etc.
- There are no uniform modeling standards.
- There is a lack of good data and it is important to spend resources in collecting good data.
- There are many factors such as safety and reliability that are more difficult to measure and determine.
- FTA believes that modeling is done on an ad hoc basis.
- It is important to study before and after results to evaluate and use the data in future modeling practices to see what worked and what did not.
- San Francisco and SACOG models are good. Tools from each of these organizations may be useful to others.
- Some factors are difficult for MPOs to identify and assess.
- There is a need for a state role to aid in modeling efforts.
- Decision makers can help modelers by:
  - Re-emphasizing need for good data collection.
  - Stressing use of the right tools for the right jobs. For example, a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) needs a high end analysis but may not need to answer TOD questions for other projects.
  - Providing adequate staffing and resources should increase.
  - Asking "what if questions" and challenge modelers and forecasters as to why the mode makes sense and is relevant.
  - Performing sensitivity tests.
  - Back-casting – look back at what the prior forecast said and evaluate.
  - Performing reasonableness checks.
- Work groups to focus on sensitive lands is important.
- The work group should coordinate with the California Energy Commission.
- Cannot mandate the mechanics of modeling.
- Focus should be on the tools used and insights gained.
- Important to realize that decision makers require better information.

Ron West, Cambridge Systematics
"Modeling 101": Introduction to Modeling (PowerPoint)

Jerry Walters, Fehr and Peers
Variations in Model Applications: Creative Applications of Traditional Models (PowerPoint)

- Modeling is a complex art and science.
- RTP model takes land use and transportation policy and attempts to translate into transportation networks, etc.
- 4D's/5D's:
  - Density – as areas become denser, VMT is reduced significantly. Shows that deliberate strategic land use and transportation can make improvements to VMT.
  - Design – community design matters.
  - Destination – regional accessibility is important.
  - Diversity – adds additional benefits.
  - Distance – distance to transit within ¼ mile or ½ mile generates more congestion reduction and reduction to VMT.
- Typical norm for travel modeling is primarily developed at a macro level or transit level and not a micro/local level. So, what is going on in a neighborhood is not necessarily covered in most models.
- MTC and SACOG models are the most sophisticated.
- There are suggestions and techniques for improving models.
- Caltrans and others are measuring TOD data that can be used by modelers.
- It is well established that travel follows investment. The question is, can models address land use and transportation interactions.
- Mobility return on investment in infrastructure should be determined.
- Simulation methods are available to test the modeling technique and proposed land use and transportation projections.

Chris Wornum, Cambridge Systematics
Other Approaches, Including Market-Based Attitudinal Surveys (PowerPoint)

- The RTP approach is a supply side approach and is not an approach that is used throughout private industry.
- The typical approach used in private industry is a market based approach which focuses on what travelers want.
- Travel experiences consist of many elements – walk to transit, distance, aesthetics, weather, headway, safety, boarding, how to pay, convenience, seating, privacy, comfort, time, productive, reliable, speed, errands during day, and connectivity.
- Two main factors to the market based approach – what do customers want and how competitive is the transportation mode.
- Important to establish competitive positioning first, then competitive modeling and then establishment of a brand that is based on what customers really want and what customers really expect.
- Key factors to consider include flexibility, speed, privacy, personal safety, environment, time value and productivity.
- Studies have shown that, for some, cost is not the most important factor. For some, the most important factors are stress, parking, etc.

- Every region has a different set of sensitivities.
- There are many layers to understanding driving behavior.
- Need for flexibility and speed was split in San Diego. Personal travel experience was shown to be one of the most important factors.
- Cluster analysis based on shared attitudes should be developed. In San Diego, for purposes of modeling, an entire community was split into groups to create 2 market segments. Identified that one of these segments was just not reachable. Used results to form the backbone of Sandag's market based approach to developing targets for transit.
- Each market segment has its own transportation method. Focusing on the sensitivities of a group aids in determining how to meet the needs of the group.
- It is important to understand markets. Look at travel patterns and know travel patterns based on density and congestion and whether another mode could beat the transportation method under consideration.
- Use the understanding of the market to make an assessment of how competitive an origin and destination pair would be.

Billy Charlton, San Francisco County Transportation Authority
Recent Model Innovations: Activity-Based (or Touring) Models (PowerPoint)

- New activity models are in place with potential to eliminate problems with other models.
- Suggests that the term "trips" be changed to "tours" to address all travel destinations from the time a person leaves their house to when the person returns home. A "tour" concept means that there are now consequences to the transportation choices made once all travel destinations can be met with the transportation model(s).
- The transportation model predicts real choices that people are making. It tries to predict how people will act or what their needs are. Every transit trip is a walk trip. Model addresses walk distance to and from the transit station, etc.
- Model used divides San Francisco into zones and has auto volumes by time of day, transit boarding by route, etc.
- FTA requires user benefits to be aggregated by all the minutes lost or gained as far as determining benefit.
- Working towards a more integrated land use approach into the model.
- Looking towards adding fare models relative to decision making given fare increases, etc.

Challenges/Issues to Address

Rusty Selix, California Association of Councils of Governments

- CEQA may be changed as a result of the blueprint legislation.
- Blueprint and land use can only get us so far and may need to address pricing issues.
- Green-TEA – how will this play into the next TEA?
- There are three venues for many of the challenges discussed today:
  - Legislative.
  - CTC guidelines.
  - Neither – informal venue.

- Issues for resolution:
  - Standard process for blueprint.
  - What goes into the blueprint?
  - How to deal with new growth areas.
  - How to move beyond the four metropolitan areas that do not have economic vitality. There may be a need for variations.
  - Legislative issues –blueprints are dependent on transit funding (high speed rail, etc.).
  - Modeling is only one method that needs measuring. Currently not aware of a blueprint that looks at 2020 but there should be blueprints that do.
  - Indirect impacts should be considered.
  - Whether VMT is the correct measurement.
  - Whether credits should be provided if there are water and energy changes as a result of the blueprint.
  - CEQA – a critical, purely legislative process but cannot be ignored and should be addressed as part of the RTP guideline process.
  - Blueprints are expensive and modeling is so expensive and need to decide what is really needed.
  - Challenges to implementation need to be addressed.
  - All state decisions need to address blueprint (example, state agencies such as Parks, etc., need to factor in blue print criteria in their decisions).
  - Regulatory actions – ARB could make changes mandatory to the extent they can establish regulations in support for good changes like that of blue prints.

Other Comments:

Lance Burris, Maglev Research Center

- Requested that the work group consider magnetic levitation transport (Maglev) when making investment decisions to solve the state's infrastructure and air quality problems.
- Suggestions included:
  - Employ cutting edge technology
  - Use Maglev – a fully integrated system that will become the world's transportation system of choice.
  - Many transportation problems are traced to the state's stove pipe decisions and approach.
  - The inventors of Maglev were awarded a medal for their work.
  - There has been a recent second generation of maglev technology that, if implemented, would immediately address the Governor's greenhouse requirement.
  - Provide Dr. Powell, one of the inventor's of the maglev, an opportunity to address the Commission.
- A decision should be made whether to use regulations that everyone will drown in or use technology to address transportation and air quality concerns.

Kathryn Phillips, Environmental Defense

- VMT is a short-term measurement.
- When discussing congestion relief, there are different types of congestion relief and some congestion relief could generate increased VMT.
- Questioned whether measurements projected for benefits to reduction in traffic congestion can be overcome with new traffic due to changes in traffic flow.

- Most modeling uses passenger miles for analysis. It is important to have ways to match concepts easily to goods movement decisions.

David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF
- Requested that the ARB adopt transportation control measures as this is the single most effective control that could be done.
- Is concerned about the level of denial as to how vast the VMT reduction changes and pricing impacts are that will be required in order to achieve the goals of AB 32.
- Very concerned that certain modeling used to consider congestion reduction steps does not consider the impacts of increased demand.

Richard Lyon, California Building Industry Association
- Represents builders that build a significant portion of the housing in the state.
- AB 32 is the law and homebuilders and the business community are committed to implement the law in a manner that is equitable taking into consideration the costs involved.
- The changes required cannot be done by regulations alone.
- Strong business and market commitments including ingenuity and private investment working with regulatory agencies is necessary to achieve the goals of AB 32.
- Linkage of land use, transportation and housing needs to be done better.
- BIA has had on-going discussions with the California League of Cities to create a linkage that housing will occur in a manner that makes sense.
- SB 303 is a companion to SB 375.
- Looks forward to engaging in discussing greenhouse gas emissions in relation to the necessary housing to meet projected population increases as well as job increases anticipated in the state.
- Some of the greatest pushback to higher zoning has been from some of those in support of SB 375.
- Blueprint growth helps communities look at growth in a more comprehensive manner.
- The blueprint growth plans are non-regulatory which is a strength and makes it possible for the necessary types of tradeoffs to occur. When regulated, many times necessary tradeoffs and needed cooperation is less likely to occur.
- SB 375 jumps ahead of ARB's evaluation of early action items pertaining to land use and other related factors.
- There needs to be a timeout to implement AB 32 in a coordinated way and not jump around.
- Homebuilders are committed in terms of efficient land use, housing and transportation.

Mike McKeever, Sacramento Area Council of Governments
- Through the SACOG blueprint process, SACOG has found a lot of cooperation with homebuilders, businesses, local governments, etc.
- Help is needed to implement smart growth.
- Discussion should be about how to reach common ground.
- Modeling strategies should not dictate what is done but should be used to inform and make good choices.
- Fundamentally need good modeling to make good choices.

David Yale, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

- Concerned with the difference of opinion between MPOs and transit agencies, etc. SCAG vs. MTA vs. other regions relative to the issues discussed today.

Pete Hathaway, Sacramento Area Council of Governments

- SACOG's model can address truck and commercial travel. The problem is where and why travel is taking place.
- Data for evaluation is not always reliable.
- The regulatory program is ahead of the modeling game.
- ARB has a critical short term need to understand mobility, regional patterns and what is going on in the valley and ports with regards to emission concerns.

Martin Engelmann, Contra Costa Transportation Authority

- Models have, in the past, over-predicted transit rider ship.
- Concerns have risen that models are not sensitive enough to predict outcomes accurately.

Formation of Work Groups

John Barna, California Transportation Commission

Next Steps and Wrap Up

- Proposed the establishment of subgroups to address modeling (including discussion of what should be analyzed, tools, data and outcomes of different policies); climate action options (including discussion of AB 32, low sulfur carbon and other strategies, to reduce CO2 emissions, as well as other air quality improvements) and smart growth/blueprint planning (including discussion regarding housing issues, transportation and sensitive lands).
  - Everyone is asked to self-select where to participate.
  - Anticipates cross-pollination with experts and not just one type of expert per group.
  - Open to discussion on whether additional sub-groups are needed.
  - While we may not have answers as a result of the work groups, our concerns need to be developed so that they may be communicated to and addressed by the Legislature.
  - This is a tremendous opportunity to create new and common visions and begin working to communicate back to the Senate and Assembly.
  - Subgroups will meet once a month or more depending on the subgroup leaders.
  - Subgroup meetings will be teleconferenced as opposed to in person meetings.
- Subgroups to be formed for:
  - Modeling, Bob McCleary, Team Leader
  - AB 32 Climate, Lynn Terry, Team Leader
  - Smart Growth/Blueprint, Rusty Selix, Team Leader
- Email John Barna at John_Barna@dot.ca.gov or Annette Gilbertson at Annette_Gilbertson@dot.ca.gov if you are interested in participating in a subgroup.
- All meetings with entire RTP guideline work group will be held in Sacramento on the last Thursday or Friday of the month through October.
- Next RTP guideline work group meeting is scheduled tentatively for July 27, 2007.
- Anticipate that future RTP guideline meetings will be a shorter duration, more focused and provide a teleconference option.